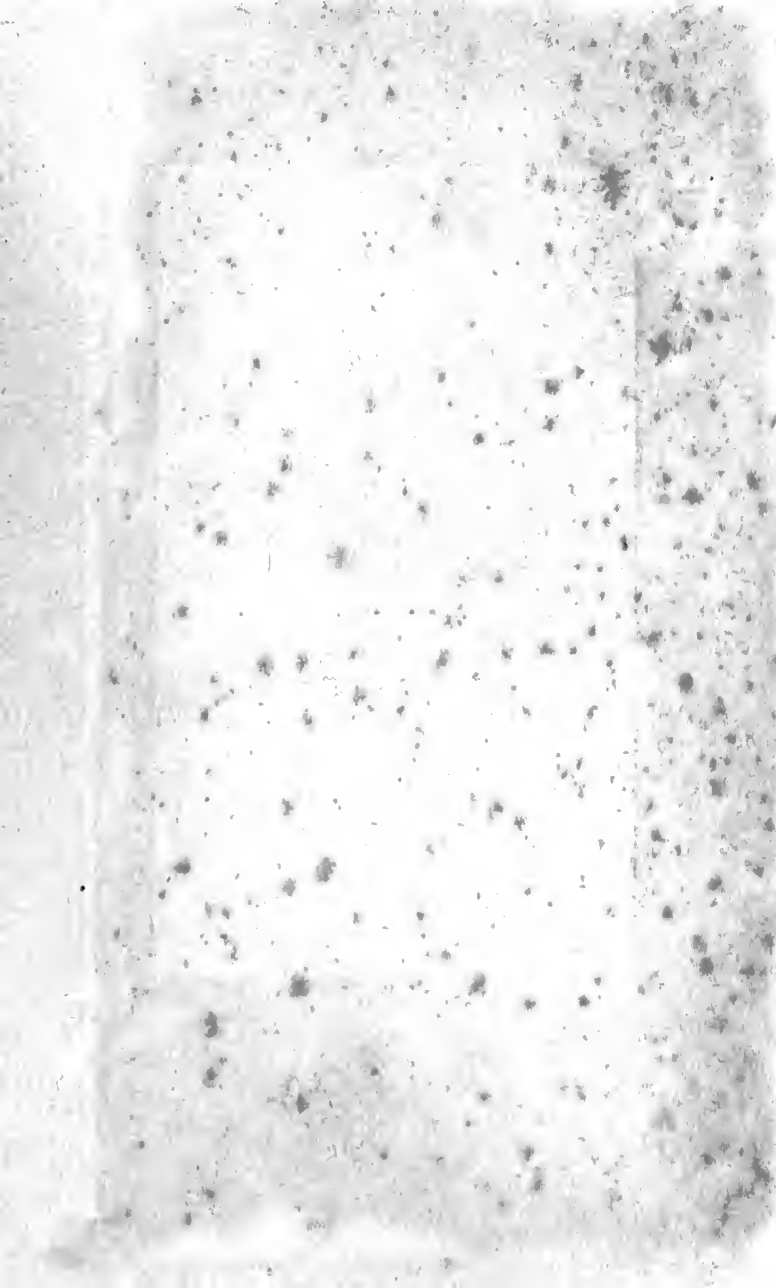




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MONT ST. MICHEL

AND OTHER POEMS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A WOMAN OF EMOTIONS
AND OTHER POEMS

Crown 8vo, Cloth, 5s. net

GEORGE ALLEN & SONS

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MONT ST. MICHEL

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ROWLAND THIRLMERE

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & SONS

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1908

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TO
W. G. COLLINGWOOD
AND
CHARLES MARRIOTT

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

918034

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A LAMENTATION

I

SORROW shall come no more ;
Hath she not spent her store ?—
 Prodigal Sorrow !
Her wrath is over and done,
The fight she has fought and won,—
To-day we may kiss our son,
 But not to-morrow.

II

Passion is laid asleep,
Love is entrancéd deep ;
 Fierce was his passion
Full many a heart he broke,
So sweet were the words he spoke ;
But he loved his father's folk
 In honest fashion.

A LAMENTATION

III

Bitter the blow he felt,
Scorned as he humbly knelt,
 When we were bitter ;
Savage the words we said,
Now, now rememberéd :
O ye who soothe the dead,
 My death were fitter !

IV

Smiling, serene he lies :
Were not his eloquent eyes
 Constantly smiling ?
How couldst thou, Death, destroy
My hope, my pride, my boy,—
Thus end his hour of joy
 With thy beguiling ?

V

Frozen the lips I kissed
So oft, ere love was missed—
 Death-cold and frozen !
His breath, once sweet as myrrh,
Makes not a feather stir ;
Earth's pride must go to her,—
 Even he, her chosen.

A LAMENTATION

VI

Pleasure goes not with him
Into that chamber dim
 Which holds no pleasure :
But earth will give him rest,
And I shall find my breast
For ever dispossessed
 Of all its treasure.

VII

Riven in twain the heart
That now feels love depart
 Too sadly riven ;
I am but an ear of wheat
Laid for the Thresher : sweet,
O flail, shall be thy beat,
 If strongly driven !

FROM THE TRANSVAAL

I

LASSIE, I am wet with blood,
Shattered comrades moan in pain!
Can our human brotherhood
Make us whole again?
Through the menace of the night
And the bullets' fitful song
I hear a voice, my heart's delight,
That makes my spirit strong:—
Where the rippling Rothay flows
Underneath the Lakeland rose,
Lassie, we will walk once more
When the moon shines clearly:
Where the murmuring Brathay makes
Music near her briery brakes
I'll say what oft I've said before—
Dear heart, I love thee dearly.

FROM THE TRANSVAAL

II

Lassie, those three words of thine
 Flashed across the sea and made
Warmth within my heart like wine,—
 Or music sweetly played ;
Home they painted in my heart,
 Mother's kind and trembling mouth,—
My sweetheart standing there apart
 Looking towards the cruel South.
When the Rothay's ripples cease
 Thou from me shalt find release !
Lassie, I will not forget
 When the moon shines clearly :
When the Brathay leaves her bed
 Then my love may chance be dead !
Lassie, thou shalt see me yet,
 The lad who loves thee dearly !

III

Lassie, I am made of earth ;
 If to earth I go to-day,
I shall have another birth
 And a calmer day :

FROM THE TRANSVAAL

Mother England owns my breath,
But a deep, immortal thrill
Tells me that we live in death—
Our spirits naught may kill!
Whilst the Rothay tempts the trout
To pack when owlets swoop and shout,
Lassie, thou shalt be with me
When the moon shines clearly:
Whilst the Brathay calls the char
To herd beneath the evening star,
Dead or living, I to thee
Shall say,—I love thee dearly.

IV

Lassie, wounds of dying men
Heal when hidden in the sand;
Rest and peace shall fall again
On this burning land!
If I die, remember, sweet,
I will speed upon the wind,
And as rivers gently meet
In thee I shall be shrined.
When on Rothay's banks the gold
Looks mysterious and cold,

FROM THE TRANSVAAL

Lassie, I will be thy mate

When the moon shines clearly :

When the Brathay woods are still

And silver silence wraps each hill,

Dear heart, we'll meet and wander late,

And, O, I'll love thee dearly.

MADELINE

I

MADELINE, O Madeline,
Your dusky eyes have ancient flame
Asleep therein, and I have seen
Some hint of Egypt's loveliest queen
About the face of her whose name
Is music, Madeline.

II

To love you came,—a lovely prize—
And those to whom your soul is given
See in your unsuspecting eyes
The innocence of Paradise:
The fairest look outside of Heaven
Is childhood's faint surmise.

III

Ere you can understand this lay
God only knows what fate may do
To me—your sweetheart for a day:

MADELINE

With whom you had an evening's play
At "Wolf" and "Bear"; who frightened you
And kissed your fears away.

IV

Madeline, O Madeline,
Beholding you, can I forget
The songs my mother sang to me,
The prayers I lisped upon her knee?
Prayers haply not forgotten yet—
My sweetheart Madeline.

MY DEAD DOGS

(VILLANELLE)

DEAR, faithful beasts who went before—
Who swam Death's river undismayed—
I'll find them on the further shore !

When Charon grimly rows me o'er
Vixen will bark and Jack who strayed—
Dear, faithful beasts who went before !

Rover will gambol more and more,
And Roy, the shy, be unafraid,—
I'll find them on the further shore !

Sweet Clyde again shall guard my door,
And Wasp be near my footstool laid,—
Dear, faithful beasts who went before !

MY DEAD DOGS

Death shall their precious love restore,
Their emerald eyes will light the Shade ;
I'll find them on the further shore !

For ever, then, shall they outpour
Affection which can never fade ;
Dear, faithful beasts that went before,—
I'll find them on the further shore !

SOUVENIR DE DINARD

I

WHAT have I done that these
New torments, belle Marquise,
Should stir my soul to new and sudden song?
O, Lady of the Seas,
Melpomene appease
Who planned and wrought on me such splen-
did wrong.

II

Your noon-blue Breton eyes
Created Paradise
A little while within me : then, behold !
Its flowers were all laid low ;
For even as sunsets go,
You vanished with my azure and my gold.

III

My heart is turned to lead ;
This bitterness, instead

SOUVENIR DE DINARD

Of love, is load more great than I can bear ;
For you are more to me
Than Æolus to the sea,
Or sunlight to the heaven-enclosing air !

IV

Where summer glories shrink
The gorse is flowering pink,
With Devil's Saffron twisted through and
through :
The creeper that has wound
My soul in coils is found
Wherever simple dreamers meet with you.

V

Its flowers are but a pair ;
They match your harvest-hair ;
No bluer is the succory than those
Twin blooms of morning light
Above the creamy white
Wherein there lies the phantom of a rose.

VI

When next the summer comes
And your geraniums

SOUVENIR DE DINARD

Laugh vividly against your shining seas,
If you but give one thought
To him whose woe you brought,
My heart will feel your sweetness, belle
Marquise !

VII

When Night and Morning meet
My thoughts are bitter-sweet ;
The House of Life has lost its corner-stone !
O why that sweet rebuff ?
One kiss was not enough
That hour when God and we were quite alone !

VIII

O, was it song of bird
Or child's voice that you heard ?
I saw you pause the moment you had said
That all your heart was mine :
What was the secret sign
That filled and shook us both with bitter dread ?

IX

One kiss enough for us !
It was predestined thus

SOUVENIR DE DINARD

That you should come to me and I to you!

I came : I had to come!

Then why should love be dumb?—

A thousand, thousand kisses were too few.

x

Ah! where your emerald coast

Shews Beauty's finger-post,

My soul, more lonely now than e'er before,

Still feels by golden sand

And flashing wave, a hand

Once mine and only once for evermore.

xi

O Lady of the Seas,

That vista through the trees,—

Your bay's bright blue beyond the scarlet flame :

The flowers that fed your bees,

And you, ma belle Marquise,

Are painted on my heart above your name.

IN BEAULIEU'S PURPLE FOREST

I

IN Beaulieu's purple forest where purple
pigeons cry
We think of clustered primroses beneath an
April sky,
We speak of hazel-catkins and bugloss brightly
blue,
But, O sweetheart, we dare not—we cannot
speak of you.

II

IN Beaulieu's purple forest the yaffle taps and
calls,
Yet our dear thrush is voiceless as are your
father's halls ;
But if to birds and maidens another life be
given
Perchance he found you listening and sings
to you in Heaven.

IN BEAULIEU'S PURPLE FOREST

III

The wastes of ling and heather are fair indeed
to view,

But, O, your eyes of speedwell that happy
time we knew!

In all the land of summer no lad so sad as I

In Beaulieu's purple forest beneath the
purple sky!

THE PYRENEAN LAND

I

O, THOU hast filled my breast with happy peace,
Fair land of silver sweetness!
In the rich glooms of spruce my heart grew
strong,
In thy clear lakes I found the gems of song,
And everywhere completeness!

O, thou art more than memory unto me,
Dear homeland of the eagle!
Thy radiant water staunched old wounds that
bled;
I walked thy valleys with uplifted head—
A pauper proudly regal!

Like Jason searching for the Golden Fleece,
I felt thy gracious spirit
Blow through me with the snow's breath keen
and clear;
And, looking towards thy greatness, half in fear,
I heard thee say, "Inherit."

THE PYRENEAN LAND

II

Did aught of his descend on me—
He who of old went there to sing?

I found the azure fleur-de-lys
That hangs above the secret spring :

I heard a voice within a vale
Whose savage beauty woke my soul,
Surprised, I listened to a tale
That made the broken-hearted whole :

Strengthened and purified by pain,
My voice then caught a clearer tone ;
At last I saw my soul again
That seemed for ever dead and gone !

For all the evil dreams were dreamed
And fire was lit within the clay ;
I triumphed in new strength ; it seemed
My life had known no yesterday.

NEW BAPTISM

(THE MOUNTAINEER IN TOWN THINKS OF THE
PYRENEES)

Now the days are grey and cold,
Vapours from the vale and wold
Make the weary slaves of gold
 Heartsick where they stand ;
But my soul looks back, and goes
Where the rhododendron's rose
Blushes by the silver snows
 Of a southern land.

Fleets away and leaves a shell
Standing at the door of hell,
Bargaining to buy or sell—
 But a mere machine—
Whilst my spirit bows before
Hills that reach from shore to shore,
Stands and listens at the door
 Of the Great Unseen ;

NEW BAPTISM

Poises on the velvet pine,
Drinks the breeze that thrills like wine,
Then in ecstasy divine
Gladly kneels to pray ;
Bathes in deep and foaming streams
Where the liquid sapphire gleams,
And the garb of sordid dreams
Can be cast away.

Whilst my spirit preens its wings—
Happier than earth's happiest kings—
Where the torrent sighs and sings
Chariots appear ;
Then upon the drifting mist,
Snowy-white and amethyst,
Mounts unto The Exorcist
That which filled me here.

Free from Mammon's damned control
And immomentous things, my soul,
Now made radiant and whole,
There its glory meets :
All heaven's doors are opened wide,
And the wanderer sees with pride
Beauty, smiling like a bride,—
The gods upon their seats !

HUSBAND TO WIFE

SADLY we wandered through the paths of life,
One without husband, one without a wife ;
Our cold horizons only clouds possessed
And morn and eve were bleak both east and
west.

Each heart had lost its azure hope of spring,
A host of cares was all our following ;
Each spirit was unhappy as a tree
That bears no blossom.—Then—I met with
thee !

When, in the heavens, two barren spheres
collide,
And one becomes the groom and one the
bride,
New life has instant being ;—though desire
From each has fled, the shock begets new
fire.

HUSBAND TO WIFE

Then two most hopeless things become as one
Bright cloud of hope, one day to be a sun :
So shine our souls in love,—thus two despairs
Meeting, transformed to joy their griefs and
cares !

THE MYSTIC GATE

IN MEMORIAM: HENRY MORELL ACTON

DEATH's Kingdom is a rich estate
That takes as tithe our wisest. He
Has entered through the Mystic Gate
That leads unto Eternity.

Honourable the record of the years
He bore into the Secret Realm :
He met the concourse of his peers
With Truth's white favour at his helm.

His presence warmed our souls like June :
We miss him, now he sits at ease
In the eternal afternoon
That falls on Death's Hesperides.

Gentle as Galahad, he sought
The dusty corners of our hearts,
And quaintly there the sunshine brought
With dear, imaginative arts.

THE MYSTIC GATE

Those who have heard his voice retain
Its echo, even as ocean shells
In which a memory of the main
Abides and ever sighs and swells.

BERCEUSE

THE snow was falling at thy birth,
Yet golden sunshine came with thee ;
As comes the crocus flower to earth

So camest thou to me !

*Hush, hush, my baby, safe on my breast,
Here, and here always, findest thou rest !*

At eventide my field was bare,
But when the fateful morning came,
Behold, a purple flower was there,
With heart of golden flame.

Each with its hood of shining snow,
Serene, the happy Alps look down ;
They see my baby far below—
The loveliest in the town.

BERCEUSE

The mighty hills stoop not nor lose
Their beauty, white as morning cloud :
Thus would I have thee always choose
 To stand in every crowd.

Stoop not to sin, but, standing crowned
With virtue, be an Alpine peak
To take men's eyes from evil ground
 To Christ, whom thou wilt seek !

And Heaven will always have its door
Wide-open for thee day and night ;
Thus pure remain for evermore
 In Christ's most holy sight.

Let not one evil thought arise
In this new life that God has given !
Like mist, such thoughts obscure the skies
 And hide the doors of heaven !

The greatest heritage is this
Free, blessed land where thou art born :
Be true to it and claim my kiss
 Upon the Judgment Morn !

BERCEUSE

When I must die I'll give thee back
To her who gave to me my flower :—
Nature shall mother thee, no lack
Of love is in thy dower !

When I am gone,—my love, my pride,—
Think not thou wilt forsaken be :
This vale, this lovely countryside,
Shall mother thee for me !

Sleep, sleep ! Both mothers are the same :
Let all unhappy thoughts be dumb :
Jesus, O, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy blessed Kingdom come !
*Hush, hush, my baby, safe on the breast
Of her who for ever gives quiet and rest !*

A SCINTILLA

O, WHAT serene, uncharted skies
Can match the azure of those eyes
That bring heaven down to me ?
The love-sick mirror longs to keep
Their beauty in its silver deep
In happy perpetuity !

White rose with sunrise in thine heart,
'Tis ever morning where thou art ;
Thy smile is morning flame :
By just one lovely, lyric word
I know thee, butterfly and bird,—
Thy perfect picture is that name !

Now thou art mine, and mine alone !
O' maid, I am a miser grown,—
My treasure being so great !
'Thy golden thoughts, undimmed, unchanged,—
In glittering heaps before me ranged,—
Have roused a greed insatiate.

THE TOWERS OF DINAN

From the towers of Dinan what is it that we see?

Waves of rolling country that all belongs to
me;—

The heritage of all men who have a heart and
brain

So large as to imprison green woods and golden
grain.

On the towers of Dinan what treasures do we find?

Messages mysterious beating up the wind;—

Coming from the sunshine and coming from
the shade;

Knocking at the soul's door till we are half
afraid.

*On the towers of Dinan what does the glad heart
say*

When there is thanksgiving for a harvest
day?

THE TOWERS OF DINAN

“ O, give us golden ploughshares that are made
of peace,
And happy, golden silences, and let them never
cease ! ”

On the towers of Dinan, O what afflicts the soul ?
The sense of life escaping ; the uncompleted
whole !

Whilst France's joyous poets unite to fill my
brain
With new and ancient music from forest and
from plain !

On the towers of Dinan what memories will live ?
The sense of ruins living, of power not fugitive ;
Of walls wrought for the ages of living stone
and clay
By splendid olden craftsmen who shame our
crafts to-day.

*On the towers of Dinan what does the fennel
preach*
Whose root has found a lodgment within this
little breach ?
However parched our spirits, they still may
wax and flower
If we but keep our vision uplifted hour by hour.

THE TOWERS OF DINAN

On the towers of Dinan what is the poem sung
By every noon-gale chanting in field or forest
tongue?

“The world is very ancient and yet its glorious
youth
Is bud unblown; all ageless are love and trust
and truth!”

From the towers of Dinan I bring this word
to-day—

O men, destroy your weapons and put your
hate away
Even as raiment faded! the cornlands cry for
men,
The pasture-lands are aching to feel the plough
again!

La Tour d'Horloge de la Duchesse Anne.

August 27, 1907.

A DEAD ROSE

SILENT the nursery, hushed is the hall :
The servants all miss her, the dogs do not play ;
Her very toys mourn : I have little to say,
My heart is too full with my darling away.

*O roses ablow on the old, south wall,
Would that my daughter could come at my call !*

These eyes have long dried of the tears that
were gall ;

One joy and one only my Maker bestowed ;
'That child—the sweet rose of a joyless abode,—
Light, laughter and music that love to me owed.

*O roses ablow on the old, south wall,
It smothered her laughter—that terrible pall !*

There is more than one life : this cannot be all !
Black Death never prisons the spirit—he frees.
I heard her one morn by the sycamore trees,
She came to my soul in the rune of the bees.

*O roses ablow on the old, south wall,
The dead are all free and ourselves are in
thrall !*

SONG TO MARGUERITE

WHEN the thrushes cry in chorus
 “Sweet she is, O, more than sweet,”
And laburnums, waving o'er us,
 Seem to murmur “*Marguerite*,”

Sweet to sit, as day is dying,
 Harkening to your low replies,
While the swallow thoughts are flying
 'Through the azure of your eyes.

Hints of many an ancient trouble
 Dimly haunt you everywhere,
You are Aphrodite's double,
 Yours the glory of her hair :

You, from olden fire created,
 Fill me with delicious fire :
We have met and loved and mated,
 We have measured our desire.

SONG TO MARGUERITE

Listen! Larks above the meadows
Hymn the love of you and me,
Theirs is but a day of shadows,
Ours is an eternity.

When the thrushes cry in chorus
"Sweet she is, O, more than sweet,"
And laburnums, waving o'er us,
Seem to murmur "*Marguerite*,"

Sweet to sit, as day is dying,
Harkening to your low replies,
While the swallow thoughts are flying
Through the azure of your eyes!

THE CITY THRUSH

AGAIN our miserable grove
Is gladdened by the voice of Love,—
Our thrush is back again :
Love led him to the city smoke,
Where hurrying streams of sad-eyed folk
Receive the sad, grey rain.

To Moloch's garden-plots he flew,
Leaving the fair, enchanted blue
And gold of happier spring :
Coming where sunny days are rare
To carol near this thoroughfare,
To cheer the suffering !

He sings of silver-whitening trees
To children bent with miseries
In this oppressive gloom ;
Making his life a sacrifice
To tell them of a Paradise
On our side of the tomb.

THE CITY THRUSH

My love and I have made our nest
Where we may see the saffron west
 Hopeful at eventide ;
And, now our thrush has brought his mate,
The desolate seems less desolate,
 And town the countryside.

That happy bird has cheered my wife
And shown her that a lyric life
 May even in gloom be spent :
Our souls of all the world are free ;
When doors of thought are open, we
 Shew less our discontent.

And often in grey, April days
We hear the mavis chant Love's praise
 When our two souls are mute :
Bright memories of a crimson hope—
That flowered on childhood's morning
 slope—
 Awake the magic flute !

And days there are that bring no joy,
When all the sweetness of the boy

THE CITY THRUSH

Within the man is gall:
Then is it that the thrush's voice
Can make the very grime rejoice,
So sweet his lyrics fall!

Sometimes my helpmate takes my hand,
As side by side at eve we stand,
And whispers—" *Is it bird?*
Some deeper influence abides
In the small heart whose holy tides
Of song seem like The Word!"

A SONG OF 'CHANGE

I

WITH cotton up a penny
There's ruin in the air ;
The haggard city faces
Rise ghostlike everywhere !
The sun, a disc of copper,
Throbs in the yellow sky,—
The red seal on a parchment
That dooms the weak to die !

II

With cotton up a penny
Men have no time to grieve ;
I talk of "*spot*" and "*futures*"
And play at makebelieve :
But when the midnight silence
Falls over heart and brain,
I wander through fair valleys,
A happy child again.

A SONG OF 'CHANGE

III

With cotton up a penny
There's darkness in the street,
What time my silver mountains
Are sunned from crown to feet :
They change not, like our markets,
But dwell serene, apart,
Away in lovely Lakeland
And hidden in my heart !

PASTORAL

I

IN Spring she never looked my way
But queened it 'mid the flowers,
The shadows kissed her day by day
Between the April showers :
Her singing shook me to my soul,
Her laughter drove me mad :
She did not know the heart she stole—
I was a country lad !

II

When Summer brought the peony
To lord it on the lawn,
One day she deigned to look at me,—
Her eyes were like the dawn :
With peony cheeks I ventured near
But, like a lovely thought,
She fled, and all my sweet desire
At once she set at naught.

PASTORAL

III

In Autumn when her purple hill
Exhaled its heather balm,
'The maiden was unheeding till
One hour of morning calm ;
When, timidly, I spoke a word
That set her cheeks aflame,
Then, laughing like a mocking-bird,
She trifled with my name.

IV

But earth grew more like heaven at last,
The winter more like spring :
Proud summer long was overpast
When Love went harvesting :—
She sang a song one Winter night,
I heard the words, and lo !
'The longed-for Eden lay in sight—
Love's roses bloomed in snow !

A BOTTLE OF 1884 PERINET

(OPENED APRIL 5, 1905)

“ULLAGED,” the butler said : the eighty-four—
The glorious vintage full of summer fire,
That oft beguiled our hearts to touch the lyre !
Come, let us see,—a full libation pour !
Ah ! yet alive, and potent to restore
To pale, sad souls the authentic, sweet desire !
The cork stood sound below the rotten wire ;—
Bright is the wine as e'er it was before !

Even so poor, shrunken creatures—long in dust
Darkly imprisoned, through the sunless years—
Oft seem to lack the fulness of their peers,
Yet in the sunshine, how their youthful must
Still sparkles in maturity and cheers
Like old wine flowing from the grime and rust.

SUMMER IN WINTER

BATTALIONED clouds are grim and grey
Above red leaves that, one by one,
Fall like fair blossoms of a May
That all too soon is gone.

How comes the dew in these mine eyes ?
Why seems the earth in splendour dressed ?
Her love has lit the doleful skies,
Making a summer in my breast.

New morning shines and thrills the place,
My heart's deep pool of ice is cleared :
Before the sunlight of her face
The white frost failed and disappeared.

HEAVEN'S CHARTER

OUR charter to new life and lovelier days
May be some kindness to a beast or bird,—
Some touch of love or pity we may show
To mute, defenceless innocents, whose praise
Of us may even in heaven be heard,
Where, in His Mercy, bird and beast may go !

CLIMBER'S SONG

How could I forget thee
Who hast ne'er forgot
When the ground about me
Grew forget-me-not,—
When the water shimmered
Azure as thine eyes,
And the arid mountains
Clove cerulean skies ?

How could I forget thee
Who hast ne'er forgot ?
O'er the fearful chasms,
In the frozen grot—
Morn and eve thy presence
Breathed a constant prayer,
And the glacier's bosom
Felt thy shadow there.

CLIMBER'S SONG

How could I forget thee
Who hast ne'er forgot?
Night laid hands of silver
On the snowland cot ;
Then we clomb in visions
Paths till then untrod,
And we knelt together
At the throne of God.

TO A LADY

YOUR eyes have made alliance with the sun ;
My soul is even as wax beneath their light,
And my adoring spirit is undone
Near you at noon and far from you at night.

Hearts are like earth when entered by such
fire :
Mine, proudly pleased, has grown this flower
for you ;
Accept it, then,—a symbol of desire
Pure as your lovely eyes of burning blue.

Yes, you are in my heart ! The spirit locks
Its doors upon your memory : I am doomed
To troubled joy : my soul is like a box
That, touched by attar, ever is perfumed.

THEATERSTÜCK

I

IT was not what you said, dear girl,
That made my heart so gay,—
You, who were voiceless as the rose
In June's most perfect day :
It was not what you said, my love,
But what you did not say !

II

There, side by side, for three short hours
We sat, and saw them play
“ Hamlet,” perhaps, or “ Pericles ” ;—
Do *you* remember, pray ?
I only heard my own heart beat
And what you did not say !

III

I knew you not, you knew not me,
But blue eyes flashed to gray
Shy messages that were commands :
In love's bewitching way

THEATERSTÜCK

You told me that your heart was mine
By what you did not say!

IV

And I was bidden there to go
By Fate, whom all obey,
So that your eyes should light my soul
For ever and a day;—
O, blesséd be the night when I
Heard what you did not say!

FAMÆ FRUCTUS

A FRUIT hung heavy on a golden bough
Such as to dreamers gives felicity :
We could not reach it, neither I nor he,
Albeit the sweat was dank upon each brow :
“ Alas I fail ! ” my comrade cried, “ do thou
Think quick of means whereby to climb this
tree ;
The slippery trunk has mocked and baffled
me—
God cries ‘ *Ascend* ’ but fails to shew us how ! ”

Then Fate spake low out of life’s inner
shrine,—
“ *Bend thou thy back and let him stand thereon :
When he has plucked the fruit, its half is thine,
Then both may sail the seas and take the sun :* ”
I stooped ; his eyes were bright, though dim
were mine ;
He seized the fruit and ate it,—faithless one !

YOUTH IN AGE

HE flowers in the snow of his age !
A gleam of the lad in the sage
Says—“ *Joy is not over and done :*
Let me laugh now the battle is won :
Youth racked me with sorrows and pains,
Whose faint but indelible stains
None sees, and my story is told !”
He cannot be useless or old
Who never leaves boyhood behind :
So keep a Spring-flower in the mind
And a young twig green on the bole :
Then sorrow will act on the soul
As the first bitter frost on the sloe,—
Make your blood all the sweeter to flow !

THE SWEET WIND FROM THE SOUTH

THE sweet wind from the South
Brings kisses from her mouth,
The scent of plums and peaches and her
 breath ;
 The fragrance of the roses
 Her garden wall encloses—
Pale roses of the South that laugh at death.

O sweet air from the South !
The rose that is her mouth
Has breathed a word of love to give me cheer,
 And all my roses flutter
 With words they yearn to utter
To match the word that you have brought me
 here !

O, sweet breeze from the South,
The memory of her mouth

SWEET WIND FROM THE SOUTH

Has fed my soul with rapture many a day :
And now your happy message
Brings the delightful presage
That April feels in sight of coming May.

AN ANCIENT BOOK

By whom, O virgin book, wert thou designed,
In strenuous days, when Dante felt his blood
Ripening with love, and human hardihood
Flowered in great deeds? Each leaf is golden-
lined

But not a solitary phrase we find!
Perchance some cleric owned thee, one who
stood

In purple gleams, beside the Holy Rood,
To all the violent world for ever blind:

More like for love, not prayers, the quires
were bound:

Maybe the lightnings of two penitent eyes
Made trouble in his heart and then he found
The need of words to ease his agonies:
Maybe he died forthwith—some gallant
frowned

And sent him with his poems to Paradise!

SONBRIDGE ALE

“ O, WHO are ye that ride in the night
When wild winds whistle and wail ? ”

“ *Three thirsty squires and a nameless knight
Who would drink of Sonbridge Ale !* ”

“ Good men have names, and the beer's grown
sour ;

O, when did you leave the jail ? ”

“ *We are right true men, though late the hour,
And thirsting for Sonbridge Ale !* ”

“ Good men stray not so far from home,
Go, go—other doors assail ! ”

“ *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb,
But never your Sonbridge Ale !* ”

“ The beer gat sour in a sudden heat,
Go get ye drink with the pail ! ”

“ *To the thirsty the bitterest things are sweet—
We'd liever have Sonbridge Ale !* ”

SONBRIDGE ALE

- “My beer is only for honest men,
Go ye to Old Jack’s o’ the Dale,”—
- “*There’s none can brew like our Mistress Penn
The glorious Sonbridge Ale!*”
- “The ale is brewed for the King’s brave
troops;
Not his are the men I hail!”
- “*This brave, big hat with a feather that droops
Is a warrant for Sonbridge Ale!*”
- “If ye are friends of the good King Charles
I will shelter ye from the gale!”
- “*Each one is a dog of the King’s that snarls,
But never at Sonbridge Ale!*”
- “The bolts are rusty—my son is dead,
He was killed yestreen in the vale!”
- “*Hats off to the hostess who leaves her bed
To draw us the Sonbridge Ale!*”
- “Ye are the men at war with the King—
Ye serpents of shining scale!”
- “*Come bring us a flagon, thou shivering thing,
We’ll pledge him in Sonbridge Ale!*”

SONBRIDGE ALE

“God make your falsehoods blind your eyes—
And bring Death’s hounds on your trail!”

“*Because a ruler hearkened to lies
We lied for your Sonbridge Ale!*”

“Ye are the men who murdered my son,
Who lies with his red lips pale!”

“*Go breed another and better one,
And get us our Sonbridge Ale!*”

“O, well for ye that my son lies low
Beyond the world’s broil and bale!”

“*Forgive us, good woman, we did not know
He brewed the good Sonbridge Ale!*”

“O give your word if I fetch the spilth
Ye will go ere it waxeth stale?”

“*We would leave this valley and all its filth
For a taste of your Sonbridge Ale!*”

“Here is the liquor and with it my hate—
I could curse you, but what avail?”

“*So cheerful a widow should have a mate
To serve the bright Sonbridge Ale!*”

SONBRIDGE ALE

- “ I have a mate, but ye see him not :
(Death’s cloak hangs not on the nail ! ”)
- “ *What ho, good woman, the room is hot,
And strong is thy Sonbridge Ale !* ”
- “ Your sins, good sirs, hell’s fires do move ;
(Let God and the King prevail ! ”)
- “ *Rebuke is better than secret love,
Hurrah for the Sonbridge Ale !* ”
- “ Drink, drink, your time is almost past
You promised—now give the vail ! ”
- “ *You are white, good woman ; your clock is fast—
More, more of the Sonbridge Ale !* ”
- “ Ye are tired, good sirs, ye should sleep awhile ;
(Ye are Siseras—I am Jael ! ”)
- “ *How strange a stricken woman should smile !
What lurks in this Sonbridge Ale ?* ”
- “ Yea, shout and shout, young Callister Dick,
This hand must fall like a flail ! ”
- “ *She has hit him thrice with an oaken stick,—
A pest on her Sonbridge Ale !* ”

SONBRIDGE ALE

“Death in the tankard! Hell for the curs!

Ah! well may the cowards quail;”

“*O God, was ever revenge like hers!*

Our curse on the Sonbridge Ale!”

INGRATITUDE

I HAD a child : flower-like he came
In spring—he was embodied spring—
Such speedwell eyes !
The sun that shines in Paradise
Warms not so fair a thing.

I feasted well upon his mirth—
Knew all that woman ever knew
Of deepest bliss ;
For heaven was in the baby kiss
That thrilled me through and through.

Why did they grow, those little limbs ?
His lily face has now become
Dark, proud and cold !
I feel life's burden—worn and old
I wait, and love is dumb :

INGRATITUDE

O baby eyes! O baby voice!
Remembrance moves me unto tears;
 Love shines again
When memory levels all the years
And children makes of men.

I cling to life, that I may see
His face flower-bright with love once more
 Ere fall the Veils:—
Only to see the boy I bore
Again, ere Change prevails!

In thought I still have heaven with me,
For in my heart he is a child,
 With all the charms
He had, when in his mother's arms
He wept, and crowed, and smiled.

BRAVE THOUGHTS OF LIFE AND DEATH

I

WHY lock away the soul's most precious pearls
Where light and air may never work their
 charms?

Our jewels lose their colour, sicken, fail!
O, wear them even as happy-hearted girls
Display on milk-white necks and marble arms
The frozen moonlight turned to lovely hail!

II

A thought that honours God is more than gem,
It lights the man possessing it, and he
Who speaks of death and what shall follow
 death—

Thinking deep thoughts and bravely uttering
 them—

Is noble in God's wisdom as a tree
Made glad in June with flowers of sweetest
 breath.

BRAVE THOUGHTS

III

Naught is too deep in Nature for our minds :
Death is not fearsome, being of life a part ;
Then let us speak of our great destiny :
Only a fool, or coward creature blinds
His sad, dull eyes, and preys on his own heart
Self-sacrificed to insincerity !

AN ELOPEMENT

I

O, HAD I only said
One little word to-day,
They would not now have sped
Upon their sorrowing way !
O, had I only said
What I had meant to say !

II

If I had let mine eyes
But soften, and had met
Fair speech with fair replies,
She might have loved me yet !
If I had let mine eyes
Pay love my heavy debt !

AN ELOPEMENT

III

She looked so piteous pale
When pleading for the word
Of love, to turn the scale.
As in a dream I heard !

She looked so piteous pale
Her father's pity stirred !

IV

I could not love her less
Despite this poniard tongue !
Despite its bitterness,
I own my heart is wrung !

I could not love her less—
My words myself have stung !

V

Perhaps their marriage-vow
Was written first above ?
Then what I disallow
Can matter naught to love :

Perhaps their marriage-vow
Was meant my heart to move ?

AN ELOPEMENT

VI

O, waste no single day
By giving pride its head :
Kind words that you would say
Should at their birth be said !

O, waste no single day,
Love's day too soon is dead !

VII

O, daughter of my heart—
Thou legacy of bliss !
I will not keep apart
From love so great as this :

O, daughter of my heart,
Return and take my kiss !

VIII

O, had I only said
But "Yea," instead of "Nay,"
Two hearts that now are lead
Might have been light to-day .

O, had I only said
What I had meant to say !

THE SOUTHSEA SEARCHLIGHT

SHE left me for a day and took delight
Over the water with her : sad and lone
I hugged the darkness, and there seemed a
stone

Hung on my heart, so that the jewelled night
Taxed not my wonder. To the Isle of Wight
Thoughts flew in streams, when lo! a beam
was thrown

Into the summer mirk, and there were shown
Thousands of insects dancing golden-bright.

I cannot say how much it pleased me
To find the dark alive with glittering wings :
The embodied searchlight of my memory
Played there upon a thousand happy things—
Her faith was visible, her childish glee,
The pathos that can move me when she sings !

CHARITY

THERE are songs to be sung,
There are things to be said :
Great thoughts did not perish with those who
are dead !

There is work to be done,
There is beauty to know,—
The plant of perfection is waiting to grow !

There are seeds in the love
Of the wonderful earth,—
Your rain and your radiance will bring them
to birth !

Keep heaven in your eyes,
For the God-given bays
Go first to the singer who hallows his days

CHARITY

With pity for those
Who stumble and fail,—
And men never moved to the search for The
Grail.

A teardrop can take
The stars in its rays,—
God and His universe, love, honour, praise !

O, be not dismayed
By the coldness of men,
But give your heart's gold—it shall come back
again.

Give, give of your love—
The clearest, the best,—
Give it all, and at last you will find you are
blest !

THE REAL VOICE

(VIRELAI)

Who are those within us mouthing rhymes,
In stately rhythm and in verse sonorous?
Who are those too noble for these times
Who cast the strange, prophetic vision o'er us?

We sit at dead of night and hear the chimes
Repeat sad warnings in a splendid chorus;
Heedless we sit, the Muse's happy mimes,
Marking magnificence unroll before us,—

Wonders of other days and other climes
And things unseen of those who loved and bore
us

Crowd in our thoughts, and Someone comes and
primes

Our hearts, His Voice the Real Voice canorous.

Who are those within us mouthing rhymes,
In stately rhythm and in verse sonorous?
Who are those too noble for our times
Who cast the strange, prophetic vision o'er us?

THE SHIP AND THE BALL

I

I'm glad you spoke, for I was half-afraid—
Wan flower that spent your summer in deep
 shade!—
You spared a word, and blessed me with your
 gaze :
That word and blessing light my later days.

II

Mere trifles made your timeworn sorrow clear :
A little ship upset in mid-career,
An infant's grief—his trouble with a ball—
And yet I read your story in it all !

III

I read your story, too, in softening eyes
That never flashed a mother's brave surmise,
And thought of babes pink-fisted and adream,
Whilst talking of the swift, unfriendly stream.

THE SHIP AND THE BALL

IV

I'm glad you spoke! Dear soul, if there be
life

Hereafter, she who never has been wife
Shall lack not love of children; they shall play
Radiantly round her day by lovely day.

HONIED HEATHER

For some short days to thee and me
The youthful prime returns
When, on the heights, the brindled bee
Sings louder than the burns,—
When August builds in shimmering air
Brave palaces of cloud,
When Eden glimmers everywhere,
And life is full and proud:
A tense and joyous life, my friend,
We lead in August weather,
When out upon the purple fell
We scent the honied heather!

Long years ago we tramped the heath
And heard the moor-cock scream,
The Atlantic lying blue beneath
A dazzling sky of dream ;

HONIED HEATHER

Light-hearted lads we were, but now
The grey hairs dim the brown,
And furrows on each moulting brow
Bespeak the cares of town :
*But still our hearts have never aged
In all life's bitter weather :
And we are young as once we were
Among the honied heather !*

The purple surge that sweeps the heights
And, wave-like, wanders on,
Is fairest of the summer sights
Beneath the summer sun ;
And what a princely joy to find
The soul go wandering too,
Across the moor upon the wind—
Far, far into the blue !
*Not merely for our happy sport
We love the August weather,
It is because our every thought
Is loftier on the heather !*

SONG OF SPRING

LARKS praise you at their altars, proud
 To hymn a maid so fair,
Who moves as lightly as a cloud
 Melts in the fields of air ;
And when I lie in heavenly bowers
 Beneath the dreamland blue,
I hear their song and see the flowers
 That bloom to look at you.

Of all my springs O this is best ;
 You, greatest of my joys ;
The man's heart broadens in my breast
 For love o'erbrims the boy's :
Earth's beauty never felt so sweet,
 It warms me through and through,—
The splendours rising at your feet
 Are touching me through you.

THE ARMBOTH SPRUCE

THIS lofty spruce, that stands in lordship o'er
the valley
Above the tawny pastures awakening in the
Spring,
Spake to my heart a word that made old
memories rally,—
Seized me and bade me pause to hear its
tenant sing.

Bending towards their lord, and offering gold,
the larches
Whisper their allegiance and all the throbbing air
Quickens now to feed him with light of olden
Marches—
The sheen of sunny noons that fell on
golden hair.

THE ARMBOTH SPRUCE

Below his rocky throne, and bowing to the
waters,

A chestnut tree is flaunting her jewelled
points of gold,
And in the old year's garth her daffodils' shy
daughters
Gleam golden, and the snow is as a story
told :

High in storm and sunshine this tree has
viewed the sorrows—

The gradual fair mutations—of twice three
hundred years,
And, green in whitest frost, has imaged hopeful
morrors
Of nested love, and promised spring in time
of tears.

There—so oft beholding our dalesmen fathers
weeping

Upon the ancient highway behind the silent
feet

Of those whom Death had sought at his dread
time of reaping,—

The spruce has been a shrine where singing
birds might meet.

THE ARMBOTH SPRUCE

O thou with head in heaven, what murmur art
thou making ?

That exquisite susurrus is surely meant to be
Charged with hopeful meaning, to comfort
spirits aching

For what the Spring unfolds not,—what they
cannot see.

A chaffinch seeks thy shadow,—clear his sudden
singing

Thrills through my heart; its message is
this and only this :

*Heaven is Past and Present ;—our yesterdays
are clinging*

*Unto the young Day's robe, here, here where
Eden is.*

Death blows away the blossom, but at length
replaces

Its light : in gloomiest hours the unseen joys
are clear :

Behold the leafless boughs, but mark the wide
blue spaces,

The amethyst and amber of visions far and
near !

THE ARMBOTH SPRUCE

O, mighty spruce, in thee I hear a voice
that thrills me
With wonder of new visions;—aloft the
buzzards mew;
To them my spirit hastes in the wild joy that
fills me
To float in skies of Thought suffused with
primal blue.

ARMBOTH : *Easter Sunday*, 1907.

MOONFLOWERS OF MANILLA

I

WHILST the evening tide is foaming,
Moths attend their perfumed feast,—
When the brief and sudden gloaming
Wakes the moonflowers of the East :
But when first the morn grew sunny,
Entered in each fragrant bloom
Little ants to eat the honey—
Cares in Pleasure's radiant room !
In my heart are ants of Sorrow,
In my soul a serpent's fang,
O the moonflowers of Manilla
 And the ylang-ylang !

II

When a maiden leans to lisp her
Love to one her soul has kissed,
She may hear the moonflowers whisper
As the pleated blooms untwist :

MOONFLOWERS OF MANILLA

Lola, you have seen expanding
Silver moonflowers, many a one,
In the moist, warm silence, standing
Silent after set of sun !
O, that Eden by your villa,
O, those songs you sweetly sang
Of the moonflowers of Manilla
 And the ylang-ylang !

III

Love, you saw them, silver-petalled,
Kissed by moths that came to drink :
Of the Moth of Love, that settled
On my heart, you did not think :
But my soul, in desert fashion,
Woke to spring, and in that gloom
Withered stems of sleeping Passion
Burst into an orchid's bloom !
Now my mind is full of madness—
Memory gives me many a pang—
O, the moonflowers of Manilla
 And the ylang-ylang !

IV

I am with you, still entreating,
Where the scarlet dap-dap shines,—

MOONFLOWERS OF MANILLA

You and I for ever meeting
By the purple-hearted pines :
You and I for ever standing
At the portals of Desire,
Love entreating, Fate commanding ;—
Overhead the flower-of-fire !
Still the fields of sweet vanilla
Breathe in bowers where roses hang,—
And the moonflowers of Manilla
 Greet the ylang-ylang.

v

When the morning orchid passes
Messages at dawn to you,
Heavy with their Hippocrasses,
Moths of Love forsake the dew :
When your heart is touched with sweetness,
As the stars begin to pale,
All rich perfumes gain completeness,
Fade away and sweetly fail :
By the moonflowers of Manilla
How your accents rose and rang !
“ *Root of all the sweetest perfumes,
 Love, the ylang-ylang !*”

**THE
MAID OF SHOULTHWAITE**

IN her, all joys of morning meet
And all Love's calendar ;
Perfect she is from crown to feet,
And, like an evening star,
She brings unto the tired and lone
The peace of sunset skies,
And soothes the unhappy sick who moan
With blessings from her eyes.

Her face ! No briar that decks the brake
May match its dawn-bright hue ;
Her throat ! Like lilies on the lake
When summer skies are blue :
Her breath is even as myrtle scent
That through the marshland blows,
Or fragrances divinely blent
Of woodbine and of rose.

THE MAID OF SHOULTHWAITE

What would you give to kiss her lips,

O you, who sing her praise?

The one who first their nectar sips

May triumph all his days:—

I heard the music of her soul

And youth ran back again

To live within Love's dear control

Without Love's earlier pain.

The mountains have conspired to give

Their child a noble dower

Of grace, that is not fugitive,

And beauty that is power:

Her smile is like an April noon

With gold in all the grass:

She fills the admiring heart with June,

My modest moorland lass!

THE VALLEY OF THE BLUE ACONITE

I

FATE, ripe in his bosom, his heart was compelling

When his feet were turned here to the aconite glade :

He chose not his Destiny,—chose not his dwelling

Here in the shade !

The moment his eyes found the shadowy sweetness

His hopes and his visions knew instant completeness,—

The wayfarer rested and—stayed.

II

Now, broken his bonds, the prisoner rejoices
In freedom at last ; and the beautiful boon

VALLEY OF THE BLUE ACONITE

Of nature's low, soothing, compassionate
voices—

Night, morn and noon—

Is his: where the peak's lofty language en-
thralled him

Forgetfulness came of the sorrow that galled
him,—

That blighted his purpose too soon.

III

Beneath that great pinnacle kissed by the
morning,

Low in the valley of spruce and of pine,—

Death's blossom, blue aconite, breathing a
warning

And waving a sign,—

He lies, and all horrors have left him for ever :
Pains of the spirit now trouble him never

Here, in his slumber divine !

IV

Leave him to sleep and say naught to his
fellows,

Forget you have seen the delight on his face ;

Leave him to dream whilst the aconite yellows

And snows come apace :

VALLEY OF THE BLUE ACONITE

Nature will warm him, and soothe and caress
him,
The forest for ever with slumber will bless him
And cherish and honour his place.

v

Pure is that brow as the snowfield above
him !
His mother will miss him, and mourn as she
weeps ;
The stream may do service for kinsfolk who
love him
And chant while he sleeps :
And Summer shall perfume the place of his
slumber
With incense in thuribles no one may number,
Whilst masses are sung on the steeps.

vi

Wisely he died where the solitude blesses
The spirit when sick and in need of repose :
He is here in the woodland's most fragrant
recesses :
The white torrent glows ;

VALLEY OF THE BLUE ACONITE

But a stranger flame gleams in these shadowy
places :—

All lovely and wistful and passionate faces
Shine not like the lily and rose !

VII

Poor stripling! His dreams and his hopes
were unbounded :

He fought in the highways of praise and of
blame :

At last with his visions we leave him sur-
rounded,—

What matters his name !

The eagle, on high, will give voice to his
longing,

His hopes with the vigour of deeds will go
thronging

Around the strait portals of Fame !

THE HOUSING OF THE HAY

ANNIE

“THE gloaming shadows gather
When rooks fly swiftly home,
The mountains wear their sunset crowns
Beneath the azure dome ;
So fair the evening stillness
My spirit fain would pray,
And yet my heart is merry
At the housing of the hay.

“The lad whose laugh is loudest
Is he whose eager eyes
Speak constantly those silent words
We maidens dearly prize ;
He has no gift of language,
His tongue finds naught to say,
But brown eyes speak to blue eyes
At the housing of the hay.

THE HOUSING OF THE HAY

“ O, dark they are, and gentle,—
The only lights I see ;—
I tremble when their throbbing glow
Draws out my soul from me.
I shiver in my gladness,
And August seems but May
When Willie looks his longing
At the housing of the hay.

“ O, have you seen the water
That shines in Tornah Ghyll,
When sunlight falls at morning prime
Through birches on the hill ?
Thus gleam his eyes, when watching
For Love’s own answering ray
To fill his heart with passion
At the housing of the hay.

“ In Maytime, or at harvest,
He whistles long and clear ;
He sings the songs that dalesmen love
Throughout the happy year ;
The tallest lad in Tornah
Is mine ; my heart is gay
To hear him whistling near me
At the housing of the hay.

THE HOUSING OF THE HAY

“The Angel of the Evening
Has touched the flowers to sleep,
And filled me with such melody
My soul is fain to weep :
O, sky of gold and crimson,
Thou dost behold to-day
The happiest maid in Britain
At the housing of the hay.”

WILLIE

“The sun forsakes the valley
And lingers on the hills,
But some one lights the meadow here,
And all my longing stills :
Sweet Annie rakes beside me,
I hear her merry lay
That seems to speak of Eden
At the housing of the hay.

“The oatcroft in September
Glows golden with the corn,
But brighter is the yellow hair
Above her eyes of morn :

THE HOUSING OF THE HAY

No queen could match her beauty,
Half angel and half fay,—
A simple maid, who thrills me
At the housing of the hay.

“The ripe red rowan berries,
That cluster on yon tree,
Are envious of her laughing lips,
Whose kiss were ecstasy!
Her smile is food and raiment;
And when I go away
My heart shall house her singing
At the housing of the hay.

“O, good she is, and gentle;
Her love flows forth to me
As purely as the mountain stream
That seeks the lover sea:
No troth-word has been spoken,
But when the night is gray
Perhaps the stars may hear one
At the housing of the hay.

THE HOUSING OF THE HAY

“ Her eyes are lovely waters,—
Two tarns of summer hue,—
The noonday sun of Paradise
Has lit their lustrous blue ;
And, looking in these mirrors
The soul forgets the clay,
And sees a spirit only
At the housing of the hay.

“ White happiness of hawthorn,
Red joy of orchard flowers,
Combine to make her laughing face
The light of happy hours :
Soon shall I kiss her willing lips,—
She will not cry me ‘ Nay ’
When man and maid are plighted
At the housing of the hay.”

THE SCULPTURE GALLERY

I

MIDST tulips glowing like a Turk's bazaar
There, half in shadow, stand the lords of
Greece,
Whose lips are silent, even as Homer's are,
And yet, like his, they sing in happy peace:
The intimate light of lamps upon them falls
And Aphrodite to Athene calls.

II

And this, my long, low shrine of flowers and
books,
Peopled with shapes that live in scorn of
time,
Is a sweet sanctuary: when Nike looks
Benignantly upon me, founts of rhyme
Stir in my heart, and Phidias comes and
stands
Viewless with lifted and benignant hands.

THE SCULPTURE GALLERY

III

Yes, there are mysteries around me here—
Shy presences that seem to love this room
Which Beauty makes her dwelling. Dryads peer
From out the azaleas, and the pregnant gloom
Is full of songs unheard ! All true souls feel
Influences that light may not reveal.

IV

Apollo, thou dost thrill these flowers in vain !
No high-priest bee intones—no minister
Of marriage hums upon the frosty pane ;
Winter has draped the earth in miniver,
For Spring, asleep in myriad sappy roots,
Still dreams of warm, moist days of opening
shoots.

v

I will officiate, O tulips—play
The priest to you young blooms—the pollen
take
From yellow anther to the stigma gray,
And consummate the rite ; I know you ache
To feel the bee's kiss on your petals fresh,
Whose nerves are keen as those of man's own
flesh.

THE SCULPTURE GALLERY

VI

Ah! tulips, though your splendours fail and
fade,

Your light,—fire-woven of mist, and earth,
and rain,—

Has pierced into my soul's most secret shade,
And an old thought comes back to me again—

*“Perchance the heavenly life that may be
ours,*

Is but the perfect life of perfect flowers!”

BELOW THE WATER-LINE

BE steady, gunner, steady,—
Some shadows are in view ;
Let's all be ripe and ready,
 We've got much work to do :
Our hearts must keep their places,
And proud must be our faces
When "*Glory's*" thorough-bass is
 A-blackening the blue.

So when they hit the target
Be nothing short of gay ;
Just think you're down at Margate
 A-making holiday :
There's nothing in a sea-fight ;
It's just a sort of tea-fight,
Or merry little free-fight
 When guns have things to say !

BELOW THE WATER-LINE

Now, when we send our ferrets
To nozzle in each barge,
The records of these turrets
 Will shew up fine and large :
O sweet to love and leave, boys,
The maids who do deceive, boys,
But, dying, never grieve, boys,
 For there's no further charge.

There's something in the air, lads :—
The Chief will give the sign :
Now, steady everywhere, lads :
 There, that's *our* bark, you swine !
Now Drake and Howard, greet us,
Lord Nelson come and meet us,—
For they that came to beat us
 Are hit below the line !

MAID APRIL

WE see her not by lake or stream,
In rain or hail, in mist or gleam—
The maiden whom we fain would praise
For primroses in woodland ways,
For morning light on rimy hills
And the delightful daffodils.

Behold! enwoven of the dew
A gauzy curtain, dimly blue,
Hung all around the sleepy vale,
As if it were the ghost of hail ;
Well, if you could that curtain raise
You might have sight of her these days
When blackbird pipes and throstle sings
'That old delicious tune of Spring's.

Most welcome April. She is there
With wind-flowers in her amber hair,
But none may gaze upon her—none—
Only her olden love, the sun ;

MAID APRIL

For she is busy with the trees
Preparing for festivities ;—
With curling frond and opening flower,
And helped by fitful shine and shower :
Earth's breath in her sweet neighbourhood
Is like a prayer : if April would
Draw back her tender veil of haze
We might upon her magic gaze :
But no ! the maiden works alone
Painting a lichen on the stone
As if to sketch in tender green
A later day's more perfect scene :
'Touching a gillyflower with wine,
Giving the homely celandine
A golden grace, and to the bee
A banquet in the willow tree.

'Thus quietly unto our minds
God comes in Spring ; sends wholesome winds
Of hope therethrough, and then in mist—
All pearly-grey and amethyst—
Of visions, breathes on flowers of thought,
Dowers them with daylight :—thus is brought
The pleasant April-thrill to cheer
Our souls for yet another year.

MAID APRIL

Ah ! April, April, thou canst do
So much with morning gold and blue,
But canst thou with thy dear, divine,
Sweet necromancy, bring a sign—
A primrose or anemone—
Unto my soul's wild wood ; give me
'The thrush's faith, the blackbird's hope—
Bring back from boyhood's morning slope
'The lark's pure outpouring of joy,
'The morning freshness of the boy !

TAMARISK

A SYMPHONY OF DECEMBER

(TO CHARLES MARRIOTT)

Adagio

HERE am I pacing my prison beneath the
funereal fog-wreaths,
Pent in this murky old city, where dreamers
grow old in their youth,—
Sad, with my feet in the ashes of glorious hopes
and illusions,
My life but a background — a scene — for
omnipotent lords of the play.

The creeds and the precepts of Beauty, once
living, are hopelessly buried
Where Mammon's black vomit of cinders
acclaims the dark pall of the clouds!
Quenched are the stars and the moon; the sun
cometh now as a stranger;
Our bodies are chilly and sapless, our spirits
are rusting away!

TAMARISK

'This darkness that strangles December, that
takes the keen edge from the palate,
Robbing the prime of our manhood of all the
high glory of life,
Has buried our joy,—our ambition,—and
even the pathway of duty
Shews faintly through tenebrous vapour, that
stands for the breath of the Age :

In this for our duty we murder the deepest
and best that is in us,
Give freely to days that are torments and
terror to souls that aspire
Oblations of hope and of ardour ; but what
shall it profit hereafter
The manhood that only awakens to find that
its blossom is dead ?

Here we have struggled to conquests, here we
have failed in the conflict,
Snatching the prize we enjoyed not, fighting
the battle in vain,
Lacking the medicine of sunshine, the joy of
the ocean's elixir
Through all the wild fights of the spirit, the
triumphs and routs of the soul !

TAMARISK

What grief to awaken when morn smiles faint
on this wilderness blatant
With shouts of black Mammon enthroned,
who puts even Moloch to shame,
To find but one refuge, one pleasure,—the
beautiful chamber of visions,—
Filled with such exquisite glamour as came
with thy message to-day!

Andante

A tamarisk spray! Ah, my comrade, so this
is thy wonderful message?
I read—I divine—every phrase; though un-
written I know it by heart;
Who writes a soul's delicate message? The
sweetest of notes are unsounded!
Thy tamarisk brings me invisible manna to
strengthen the mind.

Yes—and your sprig of the West, grey-green
as the base of a breaker
That sheds in the wind a sharp vintage, owns
kinship with Odin and Thor;—
Ygdrâsil, the holiest ash-tree, gave birth to its
earliest forbear,—
Ygdrâsil who branches in heaven, and laces
the world with her roots.

TAMARISK

When in the silence of midnight the migrants
follow their leaders
Over our glittering townships, over the smoke-
bitten land,
Often the wayfarers shudder in sulphury breath
of the cities,—
And hasten away from the lights reflected in
pestilent streams.

Then, in the morning, men wonder, they see
as they pass to their labour
A feather that sails on a midnight of waters
that ought to be morn—
So silvery pure that it seems a plume from the
wing of an angel—
So thus from the night and the stars thy
message descended on me.

It set my soul thinking of waves that spring
from deep fountains of sapphire
To honour the rocks of Lamorna with glorious
tribute of spray—
Replenished my heart with vessels long passed
to the West and with vanished,
Bright, seaward passion of sunset and golden-
most fans of the dawn :

TAMARISK

Ay, when thy tamarisk spake, I had word of
the roaring Atlantic
Turbulent, proud in its wrath beneath the sheer
cliffs of the West ;
Through curtains of fog I beheld it, illumed
with a glory of sunshine
Falling on cove and on foreland, and bright on
the faces of men.

The King, who lives in me, awakens, aware of
the message unwritten,
Athirst for the freedom that comes not, that
ever a mirage appears ;
He longs for the blessing of spindrift from
riotous billows of morning,
Yearning for sight of the azure that holds
unattainable joys.

The King who lives in me is roused, it is he
whom thy tamarisk heartens,—
A slave—were he now manumitted ! The
masterful missions of song,
The Quest that is bittersweet rapture,—these
are his duties of kingship ;
He is ready—eternally young—to reign in the
world of the Mind.

TAMARISK

By the Fates was it written of me ? “ *He shall
long for the Quest, but his yearning
In vain shall be spent, for in vain shall he crave
the credentials of Song,
The accolade shall be received and the scroll of
his rank shall be written,
But passports that open the heart of existence
shall never be his !* ”

Was it thus ? Did the stars at my birth con-
verge to the orbit of Saturn ?
And is it ordained that the music in me shall
fade like a flower ?
The rose that lacks air and the sun, shall
moulder and certainly perish ;—
A blight descends on the lily imprisoned, that
cankers its bloom.

Eurus brings cold from the East that is keener
than cold of the Norland,
Darker the sky in his leaden track than when
wild Boreas bites ;
The fangs of Eurus have pierced me, his foot-
steps ruin my seed-plots,
His drought on my harp-strings falling, strains
them until they are mute.

TAMARISK

All labour should profit the spirit: where
Mammon, degrading and soulless,
The soul has impoverished, ever we cry for
the labour divine:
And mine, sick to death in the city, now calls
to the soul of the freeman
As a captured sea-swallow makes clamour when
Ocean is felt in the wind.

Allegro

In slumber what power may withhold us from
paths we were born to discover,
Even as nightingales follow the trail of wise
birds of the prime?
The body being tethered by sleep the spirit
may seek its enchantment
Unmasked, unrestrained and determined itself
and no other to be.

Noon's light and the ocean have taught sweet
speech to thy tamarisk! Hearken!—
It lulled me with magical breathings into
abysses of sleep;
Transfigured in glamour of dreamland, my
sorrows took vesture of sunlight
And joys that are perished came back to the
present to pleasure my soul.

TAMARISK

I flashed to the mountains I worship, and there
on a glacier stairway
I heard the wild moan of white torrents that
lave the last steps of a throne ;
Exultant I leapt to the crest where gods of the
morning foregather
And lo ! I had godhead,—in vision beholding
the width of the world !

Then glad as the sundawn is glad to fashion
magnificent opals,
Endowed with the strength of Apollo, I flew
to a valley of rest
To quiet mine eyes with the purple, still waters
of purple pavilions
Wherein was the savour of summer, the
whispering voices of pines.

Swifter than light-footed lynx I thriddled the
shine and the shadow,
Inhaling the resinous incense of forests far older
than man ;
Possessing a key to the joy of the cosmical
perfume of water,
Possessed by the glory of woodlands that
hummed in the passionate heat :

TAMARISK

Then fleet as a swallow at sunset, o'er meadows
embroidered with silver
I passed; over tapestries regal of purple and
silver and gold;
Over white fountains of hawthorn, and splen-
dours of iris and tulip,
Then paused for a moment to hearken to
laughter of larks in the blue.

These marvels of May I deserted; the leonine
sands of Morocco
Had called, and my Barbary jennet was there
where I found her before;
The Atlantic blistered my face in a league-long
furious gallop,
And the world was forgotten again in the
rhythmical music of hooves.

We turned to an easterly region and through
a sharp scrub of palmetto
We rode with a glory behind us, on,—on to a
velvety plain,
Where Nature had fashioned a landscape unique
with the sweet polyanthus
Melting away to the sapphirine hills in acres
of crimson and gold.

TAMARISK

Then it ended—that exquisite vision—I awoke
on a morning forsaken
By light, but my heart was fulfilled with the
sheen of the heavens of sleep ;
And, thrilled by the dream and its meaning, I
marched to my wearisome duty
Like a soldier who thrills with foreknowledge
of deeds he will do for his land.

The King who is in me discovered his crown
and the robes that are regal :
The sea to the tamarisk whispered, the tamarisk
whispered to him
Of the blessings of light, and of laughter of
wind, and the musical breakers
That loudly on westerly forelands uplift their
hosannas of Song.

Song! Lofty the labour and holy! I will
honour the urgent mandamus ;
I will sing to thee, friend, I have hearkened to
all that thy messenger breathed ;
Those leaflets from Erato's chaplet, grey-green
as the heart of a billow,
Have cheered and consoled and inspired me,—
filled me with beautiful dreams.

TAMARISK

Hope is resurgent within me; Song's May is
 upspringing in lyrics:
As the rose of your boyhood reblooming on
 lips of your beautiful babes,
So flowers of the days that are perished come
 back to my temple of visions,
And a fire has been lit on its altar that haply
 for ever may burn!

MONT ST. MICHEL

MORNING

I

EVEN as a radiant woman draws a veil
Of shimmering blue and silver round her
form,
So thou dost hold thine elemental gauze
About thee. Is it isle or gem we hail,
Set in the pathway of the furious storm,—
In tides that do thee reverence without
pause?

II

The tamarisks are pink as morn's first fire
In hedges pranked with happy golden stars
Of harvest flowers, as I gain sight of thee
Standing inviolable above the ire
Of the wild ocean, in its ceaseless wars,—
A stately palace robed in mystery.

MONT ST. MICHEL

III

Sweet to the moth that billowy clematis
Foaming like violent breakers of the
main ;
Dear to that little, perfumed bloom of
gold,—
The wallflower's modest kinsman,—is the kiss
The sun bestows upon it, but my brain
Finds dearer, fairer, what these hours
unfold.

IV

Old tavern-keepers hang the May-green
boughs
Proudly above their portals: thou dost
place
Beauty's live sign above thine ancient
door :
The pink dianthus, blossoming on the brows
Of the hot rampart, greets the eager
face,
Announcing magic meat and drink in
store.

MONT ST. MICHEL

v

The welcome thou extendest warms and stirs
My happy soul, like some imperial wine :
The outstretched hands of Beauty reach
me here !
I fain would make those colours prisoners,
Place them in Memory's magic, jewelled
shrine,
And light my spirit with them year by
year !

AFTERNOON

vi

Where the bland river-water meets the brine
The soaring clouds are loveliest ; and there,
In the broad estuary, primeval shapes,—
Wind-built unto the day's unique design,—
Bulk hugely, whitely, gloriously fair ;
Sharp norland peaks and noble silver capes

vii

Changing to sunlit visages that move
Ever away from those who give them
chase—
The tireless hunters of the azure sky—

MONT ST. MICHEL

Fit symbols of our sorrow and our love ;
Imaging hopes that light a passionate face
Before it passes to eternity.

VIII

Bright as the silver ribands stretching o'er
The shuddering quicksands to the horizon's
fire
Shine the soul's pathways! Soon a tide
shall flow
In sad, sweet joy, and suddenly outpour
Upon the ooze and sand of old desire
New life, and freshening winds of hope
shall blow.

IX

From Avranches to Cancale the sands have
spread
Their glittering thanks to heaven: a wan
stain creeps
Farther and farther towards fair Nor-
mandy,—
'The shadow of St. Michael, at the head
Of thy fair spire, harmonious rhythm keeps
With the red sun descending on the
sea.

MONT ST. MICHEL

X

That hopeful vine besought the crumbling wall
To break the rigour of the northern chills,
And now is glad with joys of sun and air :
My soul's vine, too, in this enchanted hall
Puts forth a shoot, and finds a light that
thrills
And Heaven's own breath and glory every-
where.

XI

Those scented webs of golden lace that mark
The fennel's joy in summer, touch the mass
Of mother granite with a human gleam :
Warriors have gone and many a hierarch
But still the fennel sees the bright years
pass,
And stands for perished greatness once
supreme.

XII

These trees—last traces of the verdurous prime
When hunters chased the aurochs through
the glade
Now smothered by the wild, insatiate
wave,—

MONT ST. MICHEL

These relics of fair woodlands and the time
When Roman cohorts set dark ambus-
cade
Are voiceful as a noble hero's grave.

XIII

Who knows but that the brotherhood of birds
May yet continue human fellowships !
Do the dead monks still haunt that dark-
ling green,
Greeting each other with most gracious words,
Such as of old escaped their courteous lips
When thou of all their abbeys wast the
queen ?

XIV

In the wide chimney, spiders have betrayed
Their ebon caves with many a silver sheet
That shines like smoke arrested, and a
thread
Of sunlight, pierced therethrough, has made
A tiny dawn on stagnant mists that meet
Beneath the high-set turquoise overhead.

MONT ST. MICHEL

xv

Viols of sundawn, little lutes of noon,
Harps of the sunset, tambours of the
night,—
These give thee music, elemental, vast :
Songs are sung to thee by the mournful moon
And lilting tides, ashiver with delight,
And of the sun-song fullest share thou
hast.

xvi

Apollo's face in morn and evening flames
Has melted frosty hearts of old, and taught
A heavenward-gazing reverence here on
high
To peerless builders, whose immortal names
Linger about the marvels that they wrought
Over the lowly places where they lie.

xvii

Near the grim coast where earth's most furious
tides,
At autumn's bidding, bite the yielding
shores—
Making Courtils and Ardevon their prey—

MONT ST. MICHEL

Besieged, thy saint once more in Heaven
confides
And stands secure, whilst the Couësnon pours
Its milk-white waters in the seething bay.

XVIII

Then, when the wrath is passed, St. Michael
shines
More golden still before the vanquished
waves,
Even as Athene on the Acropolis
Took burnish from Ægean storms—divines
Where, in the sand, lie forest trees and
graves,
And ruined towers and meadows that were
his.

XIX

For the wild sea has swallowed many a league
Of loveliness : St. Anne, fair Colombel,
Tommen, and green St. Louis—all are laid
In hungry ooze ; nor polder-wall, nor digue
May bring back to this Abbey Croix Morel
Or Scissy's woodland light and primal
shade.

MONT ST. MICHEL

XX

Poised near to Heaven, thy crownéd saint looks
down,
In opal hours of calm, or when a blaze
Of sunlight smites his looking-glass of
steel,—
Searching for spires of villages and brown
Roofs of the past ; as we in mountain-ways
Peer in the vales to see what they reveal.

XXI

Old temple, solitary and more than sad
With all thy sweet and bitter memories—
Still echoing the voices of the dead !—
Glory and pain and triumph thou hast had
But, far less faithful than the faithful
seas,
Thy fires of faith are quenched and hope
has fled.

XXII

But still thou hast one living glory left
That makes new altars, morn by glorious
morn,
For high, supernal masses ; and at eve

MONT ST. MICHEL

Of sacred splendour thou art not bereft ;
For in thy temple, drear and wan and worn,
The sun is priest, whose creed all men
believe.

XXIII

Yet, here and now, an unseen ministrant
Holds up the monstrance, and there dawns
on me
Some apprehension of the Sacred Host :
My soul chants even as the wild seas chant,
Because the Muse's fair ostensory
Illumines me and all the glittering coast.

MIDNIGHT

XXIV

Up the strait pathway in the silvered night
To the historic Barbican : below,
Vigour of life and music ; here are men
Resolved to silence,—placed beyond our sight—
Who know the things that we one day may
know
When we become our higher selves again.

MONT ST. MICHEL

XXV

'There, in the jewelled tide which swiftly rolls
Across the ancient fallows, fishermen
Have laid their seines. I would I had the
power
To fix some net in darkness, for the souls
'That live in viewless waves of air, and then,
Primed with the truths of death, enjoy
mine hour!

XXVI

O Abbot, shod with silence, ope these doors!
'Tis not Montgomery knocks, but only one
With heart as full of friendship as the seas
Are live with light. Although thy chilly floors
Are touched by feet that feel no touch of
sun,
I fear not Death nor all Death's mysteries.

XXVII

'Thy mastiffs dream; no dead man's voice is
raised:
'The North Wind's Crypt is dark as hope-
less age,
Its thirty lights are dead; their ministers—

MONT ST. MICHEL

With Sourdeval, whose banner once was raised
Against thee—live in some time-honoured
page,
And on the rampart scarce a shadow stirs.

XXVIII

Yet, far aloft, high ceremonial
Fills the great church, and unseen prelates
chant
Canticles that reverberate in me :
In cloister, corridor and knightly hall
Dead voices cry to the arch-hierophant,
The great St. Michael, Sovereign of the
sea.

XXIX

Around the steeple where thy guardian saint
Stands watchful, mighty constellations
move,
With all their unimaginable spheres :
Into these wells of midnight falls their
faint,
Sad light, but not a single flash to prove
Their high concern with human hopes
and fears.

MONT ST. MICHEL

XXX

Mars, that appeared to thee an infant moon
And haply held thee spellbound, may hold
more
Than summer sweetness and midwinter
pain ;
But now thou knowest that it bears no boon
To tempt us from Earth's unexhausted store
Of beauty to its alien sun and rain.

XXXI

Behold the sky's bright characters, and mark
The riddle that is written clear thereon
From faint Alcor to far Aldebaran !
In God's great book, that silver-fretted dark
Is but one little leaf, our glorious sun
A speck of gilt, that mocks the thought
of Man.

XXXII

We may not fathom space, nor measure time,
Nor make a map of Paradise. To-day
Eden is here ; to-morrow we may find
A smoke of hell obscuring the sublime
And every hopeful joy a runaway,
For heaven and hell are ever in the mind.

MONT ST. MICHEL

XXXIII

Black as some beetling precipice, these walls
Rise from a land of old Romance, which seems
Part of a stranger world, and thy domain,
O Abbot, to the enraptured spirit calls,
Even as the sea cries to the swelling streams,
When the parched earth is gladdened by
the rain.

XXXIV

Night, now supported on those ponderous piers,
Is voiceful and each mystic planet wrings
Homage from me, but the invisible dead
Play on my heart as on a lute : the spheres
Seem nearer, friendlier ; the ocean sings
Of highborn hopes and loves for ever fled.

XXXV

In dreadful silence, on that parapet
Kneel cynic watchers, leering at the Night,—
Gargoyles of griffins and the devil's beasts ;
On distant Vega stony eyes are set,
Smiling, as once they smiled upon the flight
Of foemen and the noise of conquerors'
feasts.

MONT ST. MICHEL

XXXVI

Lone and forgotten, there they take the wind ;
Inscrutably they watch the sun-dawn come,
Symbols of sin and sin's anomaly :
No springs may chill, no midsummers make
blind
Those eyes, whose watch is never wearisome—
Not even when Night hangs thunderous
o'er the sea.

XXXVII

Around me is the very soul of space
In earth's deep breath : this night is like a
feast !
O, for a hundred hearts that I might take
Due toll of this high hour, and with its grace
Stand armoured, yea, and with each mystic
priest
Of Death converse, and bread with angels
break !

XXXVIII

Now let the incense of one soul arise
To the dumb Powers, wherever they may be,—
Here, or behind those myriad points of
steel :

MONT ST. MICHEL

Behold the great enigma of the skies,
Whose fire-worlds flash upon the adoring
 sea,—
 Thereto the soul's faint spark makes mute
 appeal.

XXXIX

We try our wings, poor midges, but how brief
The noonday flight! Behold the scythe-
 winged bird
 Swoops and devours us, creatures of an
 hour;
But even as gnats fly upward, and the leaf
Grows ever sunward, human souls are stirred
 To turn their faces towards the Silent
 Power.

XL

Thou ghostly Abbot, whose chill presence makes
A frozen riot in my veins—I crave
 An answer! Tell me, whither do we wend
Once we have finished with our joys and aches?
Do voices flower in music, when the grave
 Shuts out the sun and warmth of flower
 and friend?

MONT ST. MICHEL

DAWN

XLI

At eve when widening hands of purple cloud
Clutched the clear gold of sunset, and the
motes
Showed amber in thy grey old galleries,
One hope stood out, amidst a surging crowd
Of dreams,—one splendid chord amid the
notes
Struck by Thought's restless hand on silent
keys.

XLII

Some day, perhaps, enslaving merchandise
Shall be our meanest care, and, sanctified
At last by 'Time, Man in all faded fanes
Shall hang bright banners, count Life's greatest
prize
The power to see earth's beauty, feeling pride
Most in the sun and least in paltry gains.

XLIII

Then, when our thoughts are less in mart and
mill,
A newer faith shall spring from newer powers
Vouchsafed to us, and we shall shape a
creed

MONT ST. MICHEL

Lovely and charitable and pure, to fill
Our lives with strength and beauty, as the
flowers
Flood with fair light a May-enchanted
mead.

XLIV

Our silver censers shall not cease to swing
In honour of the supreme Source of All—
Balancer of planets, and the Lord of
space—
We shall not cease to laud Him, nor to sing
Our littleness because the old faiths fall
Like ripened fruit, nor cease to seek His
Face.

XLV

If in that happier time, we build a throne
For Justice—godlike guardian—and take
Beauty for idol, shall our hearts be cold
At thought of Him who set in fire and
stone
Proofs of infinity? Shall these not make
Him greater to us than He was of old?

MONT ST. MICHEL

XLVI

The snow-born gods, the old divinities
Of the most secret Pole,—the mighty Thor,
The gentle Balder,—these no more may
hear
The Viking's resonant voice upon the seas ;
The sun upon their altars nevermore
May shine ; yet they shall never disappear.

XLVII

Throned in its high pre-eminence, shall we
Still see this fane inviolable, and Time
Prouder than ever of each wind-worn
wall ;
And the sweet, pregnant silence yet may be
Resolved to music in the later prime
When man his greatness hymns, and not
his fall.

XLVIII

Meanwhile, the sunrise—that most glorious
prayer
In Beauty's silent voice,—makes high appeal
Unto the Lord of Light. O, would that I

MONT ST. MICHEL

Might snatch from out the palpitating air
The essence of its charm, and then reveal
Its meaning, moulded for Eternity!

XLIX

Outpost of Beauty, lordly sentinel
Of the fair spires of our delightful France!
When seamen scan thy glories from afar
Does not the current of the spirit tell
Their hearts that thou, in thy serene
advance
Art nobler, greater than thy splendours
are?

L

Beauty is naught but faith made perfect. Lo!
The spheres are beautiful, yet the reverent
find
A world of beauty in the lowliest flower :
Planet and pearl are equal ; we shall know
Through Beauty only, why the Master-Mind
Gave to mankind its inessential power.

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MONT ST. MICHEL

LI

When the bright torches of Intelligence,—
Held by the Church of Christ,—have lit the
earth,
The dominant power shall be that light
terrene ;
For, if Religion be not mere pretence,
The Church must foster knowledge from its
birth,
Its guardian, its champion, and its queen !

LII

God signs new charters when our new desires
Are shaped by charity and faith fulfilled ;
Yet, in the dimmest chambers of Man's
brain
Great lights were placed, kindled at holier fires
Than ever burnt on altars. Minds that build
Their faith on Nature do not work in
vain.

LIII

Alas! like Richard, strenuous Rome was doomed
Never to see her fair Jerusalem ;
Her vanities, ambitions, and her wars,

MONT ST. MICHEL

The guiltless martyrs whom her ghoulds entombed,
 Availed her naught! Those only should
 condemn
 The just who know the secrets of the stars.

LIV

But greater creeds are dead : our busy world
 Forgets the soul, exalts the body where
 The spirit reigned of old ; the Crucified
Makes his appeal with banner almost furled
 And wandering seeds of Doubt now fill the air
 Which root in gardens once Religion's
 pride.

LV

Yea, from her wounds the Church of Jesus
 draws
 The warm, red blood, and even as Beaumanoir
 Drank of the precious current of his veins,
So drinks the imperial Church, whose ancient
 laws
Compelled two hemispheres to peace or war
 Through many peaceful and empurpled
 reigns.

MONT ST. MICHEL

LVI

But whilst there still breaks forth one single
bloom

From the far-spreading briar that wraps
the land,

Hope cannot perish ; there shall yet arise
From vile oppression and appalling gloom

A creed more sweet than Freedom, when
His Hand

Gives us full use of earth, our Paradise.

LVII

O brave old faith ! No longer we behold

A strenuous Odo with his battle-mace

In high delirium of the maddening fray :

Nor yet a Turpin in his helm of gold,

Slashing the jewelled shield and swarthy face

Of some majestic heathen of to-day.

LVIII

Yet more than ever now we need the strong,

Brave monks and priests and bishops mili-
tant :

In these degenerated days, the world abounds

MONT ST. MICHEL

With monsters to be slain : a deep, red Wrong
Scores Freedom's features, Vice is arrogant
And many dead men lie not underground.

LIX

Therefore, O priests, a new, great empire lies
Open to conquest : you may sow no stars,
Nor may you sport with kingdoms, yet be
sure
You have still nobler saints to canonize,
Who shall be victors in your moral wars
And make their epoch strong and great
and pure.

LX

The pagan lives in every Christian land,
More heathen than his brother of Cathay ;
The weeds of vice grow higher year by
year ;
Abysms of darkness yawn on every hand,
Ay, in Christ's fold : His missioners to-day
Need never seek the East : their work is
here !

MONT ST. MICHEL

LXI

Yea, deal with such as these, Archangel Saint,
And, in thy grace, compassionately ordain
That sapphire signets for wise cardinals,
And bishop's amethysts be carved: the plaint
Of men is heard—*We need the Church again*;
Heed then their cries and mute memorials.

LXII

Darkness must go where all oppressors go,
And some great priest, as wise as Innocent
Who swayed the world, or brave as Julius—
Of Popes the Cæsar—may on Man bestow
The key to free us from imprisonment
Of soul, and light new fires of faith in us.

LXIII

The night is past, the new day comes apace;
The heart of man lies open as those sands
Which captured many rainbows yestereve:
Ere long a dazzling dawn shall fill each face
And from Unseen yet All-protecting Hands
Each spirit shall the gift of Light receive.



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